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ABSTRACT

This packet, prepared to give support and guidance to independent schools striving to develop courses and design curricula in Afro-American studies, presents sampling course descriptions from seven selected schools on black studies intended for junior high and senior high students and offers two statements on black literature. The booklet is divided into three parts: Part I includes courses selected from the 100-plus questionnaires returned to the Choate-Afro-American Resource Center in the fall of 1969. Selections indicate the diversity in philosophies, techniques, materials, and racial composition of classes. Course descriptions provide an explanation of establishment of the course, general aims, general course content, texts, methods, evaluation, and recommendations. Part II presents two statements on black literature; one, "The Black Picaresque in Fiction" by Dr. Charles H. Nichols, contains autobiographical writings on black experience that reveal deep conflicts which, when translated into fiction, assume the form of the picaresque. The other, "Negritude" by W. A. Jeanpierre, examines the Negritude movement and explains the themes of black experience in poetry. (Author/SJM)

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"BLACK STUDIES IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS"

INTRODUCTION

"If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world." -Carter G. Woodson

The interest in courses on Black Americans has begun to make itself felt in major proportions on a growing number of independent school campuses. As the number of black students has grown, and with the aid and support of socially conscious and activist white students and faculty, the demand for black studies has become a new and significant area of faculty-administration attention. This movement parallels what has occurred on many university campuses and urban public schools. Black studies or Afro-American studies is a rather elusive term which has been used indiscriminately to cover a broad spectrum of concerns. For the sake of this statement I would like to treat the two terms synonymously, although I suspect that there are clear philosophical differences that might be assigned to each. Whichever name is preferred, it is encouraging to note that serious and scholarly efforts are being made in many colleges and schools to develop courses and design curricula.

We believe that black studies is a reality and not a fad that will pass away because we choose to tolerate it. Black Americans recognize the need to firmly establish their heritage and rightful place in this country, and they view black studies--for both black and white students--as an important step in this process. The need for this country to resolve its racial situation is based upon mutual understanding and respect among the various racial groups, and we are certain that black studies can contribute significantly to the realization of this goal.

What it is, how it should be taught, who should teach it, who should take the course, will not and cannot be answered in this statement. We believe that these are questions that each institution must resolve for itself in a very personal way, and our role is viewed as a catalyst in the process.

This packet has been prepared to give support and guidance to independent schools that are striving to respond to this very important and critical need. The courses were selected from the 100 plus questionnaires returned to the Choate Afro-American Resource Center in the fall of 1969. The two statements in section II were originally prepared for a workshop which was to have been held in the fall of 1970 at the Choate Center. Unfortunately, the workshop was cancelled, but we are pleased that this packet offers us the opportunity to bring these two important statements to your attention. We are deeply appreciative of the time and effort of the teachers and schools who have contributed materials to this project. We have tried to provide a sampling which would illustrate the diversity in philosophies, techniques, materials, and racial composition of classes and instructors. We hasten to add that we do not claim to be experts in the area of Afro-American studies.

It is our hope that this packet will increase understanding of what is being done in this area and suggest ideas for the strengthening of black studies programs in independent schools. Space limits the number of courses that could be used, but we hope to continue gathering course descriptions and making them available in the future. To this end, we would appreciate receiving course descriptions from other schools.

William L. Dandridge
Staff Associate, N.A.I.S.

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F. Milton Academy, Milton, Massachusetts

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PART II Papers which speak to the Black Experience

A. "The Black Picaresque in Fiction" by Dr. Charles H. Nichols, Professor of English, Brown University.

B. "Negritude" by Wendell A. Jeanpierre, Executive Secretary, Brown University, Afro-American Studies Center.

PART III Bibliography

ABINGTON FRIENDS SCHOOL

JENKINTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA By Mrs. S. L. Zitin

Embodied in the philosophy of Abington Friends School are two phrases, one of which says: "The School tries to provide an atmosphere in which each child is helped to recognize and develop his own sense of personal worth, and thereby to discover his responsibility to his fellow man." The last statement in the philosophy states . . . "the School hopes its graduates will use what they have learned, academically and socially, to take an active part in shaping a better world."

In the early summer of 1967 my predecessor and I were discussing my future plans as his replacement. He confessed that the 8th grade curriculum had been unsuccessful and that the history curriculum, further, was not geared closely enough to the philosophy; we agreed that the time might be ripe to initiate "Negro" History, remembering that both Malcolm X and Kenneth Clark had advised puzzled whites who were anxious to improve race relations that their greatest contribution would be to educate whites to the evils of white racism. Whether teaching 8th graders black history would be the most effective way to do this remained to be seen.

As the course evolved, the main goal was to learn more about the Afro-American and to weave this knowledge into the tapestry of American History in order to complete the picture. By including current events, so many of which relate to this subject, the course would be made more relevant to the student.

Unfortunately, although the Administration was wholeheartedly behind the curriculum change, we did not realize the necessity of consulting with parents and School Committee in order to encourage their support in what was then a rather "daring" venture in a school whose student body was largely white, suburban and upper middle class. Although there was resistance from a few parents, the class received the course with great enthusiasm, and many girls explored far beyond the assigned work and classroom reading. (This year I am teaching some of the same girls standard American History and it is quite gratifying to note how much they remembered from three years ago.)

It seems impossible to believe in 1971 with the plethora of books at any publisher's display that just four years ago there was such a dearth of material. Rather than recite the agonies of searching out enough of interest at the proper age level, it should suffice to say that it is a happier state teachers are in now, where they can pick and choose from many materials. However, it is worth noting that I was also able to

evolve a method of inserting various facets of black history into the American History I was teaching to 11th and 12th grades, and the climactic outcome was a request from several of these juniors that we offer an elective course in black studies at senior level. By this time we were so comfortable about this part of our curriculum we consented to this senior course without any further consultation with Board or parents. (However, the total history curriculum had been carefully explained to some of the School Committee not long before.)

The two courses as taught this year are outlined below:

8th Black History, 1971-'72

General Aims:

1. To supply knowledge of that facet of history most often not included in American History.

2. To place this knowledge within the larger framework of American History so that certain concepts will be explained.

3. To add relevant current events and to try to create a dialogue about present problems.

Texts

Cuban, Larry and Cohen, Irving - The American Negro

"The Negro in the Making of America" - Scholastic Great Issue Series

Films - "Black History, Lost, Stolen or Strayed"
"Frederick Douglass"
"The Heritage of Slavery"

Film strips on slavery, Africa, "The Me Nobody Knows," etc.

Outside reading - Puddnhead Wilson by Mark Twain,
Others chosen from book list

Methods

Discussions, games, role-playing, volunteers for news reports, some team teaching.

Some exchanges with inner-city all-black school.

Trip to Man in Africa at N.Y. Museum Natural History

Student Reactions

Awakening of understanding.
Some resistance to militant views.
Some "playing the game of pleasing the teacher."
Mostly enthusiastic participation.

Evaluation

Although the results have not been earthshaking, the students have opened their minds to many new ideas and they are seeking answers to problems which they never had even seen as problems before this.

The request for the senior elective was a positive result.

The opportunity to introduce historical concepts and create an inquiry approach occurs at an earlier level now.

12th Black Culture, 1971-'72

Aims:

1. To foster better understanding and hence better relationships.

2. To help prepare our students for the very different society they will meet in college.

3. To try to help students share education with the community.

Texts

Summer reading: Cleaver, Soul on Ice
Autobiography of Malcolm X
Grier & Cobb, Black Rage

Quarles, Benjamin - The Negro in the Making of America
Ellison, Ralph - Invisible Man
DuBois, W.E.B. - Souls of Black Folk
Bohannen, Paul - Africa and the Africans
Salzmann, Zderek - Anthropology

Methods

1. As much class discussion as possible.

2. Students required to turn in a weekly idiosyncratic journal of any experiences; reading, personal, T.V., movies, plays, etc.

3. Many class trips - to plays (The Great White Hope), art museums, local exhibits, etc.

4. Students conducting some classes.

5. Independent work projects (questionnaires, teaching in nursery school, etc.).

6. Very thorough book discussions - several weeks on Ellison, for instance.

7. Same films and film strips as for 8th grade.

8. Anthropology is an innovation this year, because the end of last year's course was flat, as are so many senior courses, and the anthropology is more of a college discipline and should hold interest; it also ties in with emphasis on Africa toward end of course.

Student Reaction

The most rewarding I've ever had.

Evaluation

A valuable addition to any curriculum, especially with a multi-disciplinary approach.

The ideal method of study will have been achieved when the study of black history and culture is completely incorporated into the rest of the curriculum so that it becomes a basic part, not a separate entity, of the American scene.

AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

CONCORD ACADEMY

CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS

By James L. Parker
History Department

Establishment of Course and Aims:

Our course in Afro-American Studies evolved out of a felt need on the part of our students and faculty that the black experience had not been and was not being given adequate coverage in the regular course of American history. We have only a small number of black students at Concord Academy, so the pressure of the times and a willing, liberal atmosphere were the only pressures we felt for instituting the course. We wanted a course of study that would be more than straight history so we called it Afro-American Studies and sought the assistance of various other departments at the school, namely, the English and Media, Art, and Music departments, in presenting the course. Though it was aimed primarily at white students, the course contained enough latitude in methods to make possible special kinds of projects for white or black students who wished to engage in them. Two one-hour periods per week were used for historical development of Black America and discussion and one-hour period per week for the complementing aspects of the course: literature, art, music.

The course was offered for one semester in the fall of 1969 and was repeated the second semester. We acquainted ourselves briefly with the early African civilizations. We studied the institution of slavery in America, the conflict leading to the Civil War, the position of the black from the Reconstruction period to the mid-20th century, the movement toward integration and an examination and evaluation of problems facing blacks and whites (as related to blacks) in America today and of solutions posed to resolve these problems. We also sought to acquaint ourselves with contemporary Black Culture, including black literature and music.

Texts Used:

Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America
Bennett, Before the Mayflower
Fishel and Quarles, Black America (Documents)
The Negro American: A Documentary History
Chapman, Black Voices
Malcolm X, Autobiography
Stampp, Peculiar Institution
Woodward, Strange Career of Jim Crow
Kerner Commission, Report
Cleaver, Soul on Ice

NOTE: The previous year we had had at our school a special lecture and study series on Black America, so we have in our library an exceptional collection of books, magazines, articles, and documents dealing with Black America. These were at our disposal for use in the course, naturally. We also made use of films such as the television series on Black America which included "Negro History, Lost Strayed or Stolen?" The special annotated bibliogrpahy from Princeton University was also particularly useful.

General Course Content:

From Africa to America
Colonial Slavery 1619-1800
Slavery Enthroned, Defended, Attacked, and in Crisis 1800-1860
The Civil War 1860-1865
Disappointment and Jim Crowism 1865-1900
Beginning the Upswing and World War I 1900-1920
The 20's: Hope, Harlem, and Hatred
Black America in the Black 30's and World War II 1930-1945
To 1954 and Beyond

Methods:

Reading and class discussion, some lecturing.

Special projects: research, student teaching, recorded music presentations, newspaper reports, exhibits, etc.

Student led classes based on projects in which they have engaged: e.g., W.E.B. DuBois, urban renewal and the black, storefront schools, black studies programs at universities.

Use of student teachers - one black student and one white student who excelled in the fall semester assisted the teacher in the course second semester. They helped plan the assignments, helped to grade papers and made up examinations and quizzes.

Some classes were devoted to slides of African art, discussion of black literature and of jazz.

Evaluation: and Recommendations:

The course should be a full year course if possible, with more emphasis on the present.

Better coordination of other aspects of black studies with the historical development.

Special projects are of great and varied value.

Give more time to student involvement such as in using projects, taking classes, lecturing, etc.

Provide reading assignments more in advance for sessions on literature, art, music, etc.

Some of the students felt inadequately prepared in historical background; others wanted less history and more of the contemporary scene.

Student teachers were particularly successful.

Readings probably too heavy the first year: continue with Quarles as a basic text, use selected source readings as well as selected parts of Stampp and Woodward, both very good and well received. Malcolm X also excellent and Kerner's introduction a must. Black Voices also valuable.

The course will probably be offered every other year; schedule planning by students will allow taking it. One outgrowth of the course has been an English department course in Afro-American literature, given this year.

Finally, we feel the course has tremendous value and should become part of the regular curriculum. We would prefer to have the course taught by a black teacher but do not feel that this is essential.

AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY

CONVENT OF THE SACRED HEART

GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT By Sister Grace Leslie

"I am no expert in this new field but felt that a course should be offered last year in this school though so few elected it that the course need not have been given. I have used the texts that I myself used in a course given at the University of Detroit in the semester - Jan. to May 1969. Last year I had the good fortune to have a black girl in the group who contributed a great deal to our class discussions. I feel that the students gained a great deal.

This year a new dimension was added when one of the Manhattanville students--a black girl--came over once a week. She was doing this as part of a course and was working under the direction of her college advisor. She shared with us the fruits of her independent research in his course. We have a small class but I feel it is a very valuable one. At present the concern of the head of the Social Studies department is that because Afro-American History is elected not all the students are exposed. She hesitates to add requirements in our curriculum. I might add that a course in Black Literature is one of the most popular English electives offered in the school."

Texts: as used in 1969-1970 except addition of Newsweek (for current events relating to course).

RESOURCE PERSON:

Student from Manhattanville College came once a week. Her part in our program was worked out with her advisor as part of a course for which she received credit.

Topic: Black Leaders

As she was black, she could add a dimension not possible for a white teacher.

GOALS OF COURSE:

1. To give students a background in Afro-American History.
2. To make them aware of contributions of black Americans.
3. To motivate them to become involved in solution of problems of racist America.

OUTLINE OF COURSE

I Problem of Negro Identity
II History of Africa
III History of the slave trade-African base
IV Slavery in Colonial America
V Negro in Society 1800-1860
VI Reconstruction Period
VII Post Reconstruction
VIII Recent Developments - 1930-1970

CREATIVE PROJECTS executed by students

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH:

In areas of: psychology, religion, sociology, political science, economics, law criminology, education, slave trade, customs and folklore, art, music, recreational arts, literature, poetry, drama, fiction, satire and humor, biography, African History, Blacks in American History, the Old South.

TEXTS:

From Plantation to Ghetto - Meier and Rudwick, Hill and Wang AC 01 $1.85

Black Power - Carmichael and Hamilton, Vintage V-33 $1.95

Autobiography of Malcolm X

Black Rage - Grier and Cobbs, Bantam

BROADWAY PLAYS:

Great White Hope
Purlie

FILMS:

Cry, the Beloved Country
Time for Burning
The Harlem Crusader
Last Reflections
My Childhood-
Part I--Hubert Humphrey's South Dakota
Part II--James Baldwin's Harlem
Harriet Tubman and the Underground
Cities and Poor
Frederic Douglass

Boundary Lines
Children Without
Heritage of Slavery
Martin Luther King

RECORDS:

Poetry-Langston Hughes
March on Washington-August, 1963
African Folk Tales
Negro Spirituals
Afro-American History

AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

THE HARLEY SCHOOL

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

By Mr. David McDowell

DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM

We have not established an Afro-American course in our regular curriculum at Harley. Rather we have, in various ways, included topics in Afro-American studies in our English and History courses, particularly in American History courses for grades 8 and 11. In addition, our Focus program, a second curriculum of "mini-courses" meeting twice a week in six week blocs, has been a vehicle for offering Afro-American studies to our students.

FOCUS COURSE

"The Negro in American History" has been open to grades 7-12. It has been based on a series of films, carried on the National Educational Television Network, entitled "History of the Negro People." The films were videotaped and presented to the class with discussion following.

The films:

"The Heritage of the Negro"
"Negro in the South"
"Slavery"
"Brazil: the Vanishing Negro"
"Free at Last"
"Omowale: The Child Returns Home"
"The New Mood"
"Our Country Too"

ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Grades 7-12: At all levels the poetry of Negro Americans is read and discussed, for example Langston Hughes, Leroi Jones, Gwendolyn Brooks.

Grade 10: Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn is read, in conjunction with the poetry of Negro Americans.

Grade 11: Eldridge Cleaver's Soul on Ice is read by all juniors.

Grade 12: Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Langston Hughes, ed. The Best Short Stories of Negro Writers are the basic materials. Opportunities for independent study of Negro American writers are offered.

HISTORY CURRICULUM

Grade 8, American History:

Materials: American Education Publications pamphlet, "Negro Views of America."
Oscar Handlin's The Newcomers

Objectives: To describe and analyze the changing attitudes of Negro Americans since slavery; Frederick Douglass, Richard Wright, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and Stokley Carmichael are some of the individuals studied.

To describe, compare, and contrast the American Negro's experience with that of other immigrant groups.

Grade 9: Glazer and Moynihan's Beyond the Melting Pot, a further study of American society's treatment of minority groups.

Grade 11, American History:

This is a problem-oriented approach to American History. One of the problems dealt with is "The Social Setting of Intolerance," involving study of the Know-Nothings, the Red Scare of the 20's, Joe McCarthy, and discrimination against immigrant groups and the Negro. In addition to assigned readings, outside readings from Claude Brown, Richard Wright, James Baldwin and others are done on an individual basis.

Grade 12, The Urban Community:

An elective offered to seniors, this course deals with the problems of the American city. Using Rochester as a laboratory, students are engaged in independent study as well as the core readings of the course. The role of the Negro in America's cities is dealt with directly and indirectly throughout the course.

STUDENT REACTIONS

The Focus course outlined above has been well-received, and the mixing together of grades 7 through 12 has proven to be particularly good for discussion. The eighth grade reacted enthusiastically to their unit on "Negro Views of America" last year, and we plan to present it in essentially the same way in the Spring of 1971. English students have reacted well to reading works by and about Negro Americans.

FACULTY EVALUATION

In this particular school at this time we feel that including Afro-American studies within the existing curriculum is best. We have not felt the need for establishing a separate course or curriculum, but prefer to treat the history and literature of American Negroes within the context of American history and literature. We have attempted to make classroom activities shed some light on problems in the Rochester community; speakers from the local SCLC chapter and from Urban League have talked with the whole school. Students have been encouraged to participate in fund-raising activities for Harley's "North Star" program, a scholarship fund named for Frederick Douglass' newspaper here in Rochester. In short, Harley's students hopefully have the opportunity both to study the Afro-American in English and History courses and to relate to him in the community.

LOOMIS SCHOOL

WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT By Brayton A. Porter, Jr.

"This course is a result of the trial and error experienced in teaching a similar course at the Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Some of the errors were corrected, but some of the problems I have now run into never became apparent because studies at Augsburg, University of Minnesota, and the University of Hartford where the teachers would help in the evaluation of materials. One of the early problems I ran into was trying to cover too much in the way of reading materials.

All year long pertinent material from periodicals, many of them black, e.g., Jet, Ebony, Chicago Defender, etc. to which some of the students and the library subscribed were brought in for class discussions. Evaluation by the students was done at the end of the fall term via a questionnaire. (Attached is a copy of the questionnaire and excerpts from the students' responses.)

The Loomis School's History Department is spending a considerable amount of time as a department trying to figure out answers to the questions, ways to satisfy the demands, and a better way to do what is now called black studies, next year it will be called Afro-American History."

Loomis School Catalogue 1970-'71, Pages 62 - 63

"736 Black Studies: First term: Black Heritage in Africa and the Slave Trade: The social, political, and economic history of pre-colonial Africa are examined to show that the modern American Negro has every reason to want to know and to be proud of his African heritage. There is considerable reading in the origins and the general history of the slave trade, as well as material on colonialism and modern Africa. Every effort is made to keep the material relevant by constant reference to Africa and the Negro, both in the United States and in Africa, today.

Texts: Brown, Manchild in the Promised Land; Bohnannan, Africa and Africans; Singleton and Shingler, Africa in Perspective; Davidson, The African Slave Trade and others.

Second term: Slavery, Reconstruction and the Growth of Jim Crow: This course concerns itself with: 'Why Slavery?'; 'Why Black Slavery?'; 'The Role of the Negro in Pre-Civil War History'; 'Was Nat Turner The Only Slave Revolutionist?'; 'What Role Did The Negro Play, North and South, in the Period from 1830-1860?'; 'The Role of the Negro in the Civil War'; 'Jim Crow'; 'Who were the Black Leaders in the United States from 1865 to 1900?'; 'How did Reconstruction Equal Redistruction for the Freed Slave?'.

Texts: Bennett, Before the Mayflower; The Autobiography of Malcolm X; Allport, The Nature of Prejudice; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom; Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America; Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow; Baldwin, Blues for Mr. Charlie.

Third term: Crisis in Black and White: Although this is largely an examination of the emergence of the 'militant' Black (and white) in the post World War II period, there is some examination of the problems and background during the period 1900-1920, the depression, and the New Deal. Much of the emphasis is on contemporary and local problems involving Blacks with a view to what practical solutions the Loomis student can involve himself in.

Texts: Ellison, Invisible Man; Cleaver, Soul on Ice; Bennett, Before the Mayflower; Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom; Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America; Freedom to the Free: Report to the President by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights; Duberman, In White America; Silberman, Crisis in Black and White.

During the fall or winter terms students in this program may elect to take English 037, a course in Black Literature."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Winter Term Readings

Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom
Allport, The Nature of Prejudice
Autobiography of Malcolm X
Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
Cleaver, Soul on Ice
Three Negro Classics: Up From Slavery
Souls of Black Folk
Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man

Winter Term Films

The History of the Negro in America
Birth of a Nation

Uncle Tom's Cabin
Civil War and Reconstruction
March on Washington
Confrontation in Washington: Resurrection City
Klu Klux Klan
Heritage of Slavery
Sit-In: Parts I and II
Our Country Too

Spring Term Readings

Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom
Cronon, Black Moses
Ellison, Invisible Man
Gregory, Nigger
King, Why We Can't Wait
Lincoln, Black Muslims in America

Spring Term Films

The Angry Negro
Tenement
The Cities and the Poor
A Block in Harlem
Marked for Failure
Other Face of Dixie
Freedom Movement
New Mood: Protests, 1954-64
A Day in the Night of Jonathan Mole
The Way It Is
Incident in Roxbury
Free At Last
Harvest of Shame

THE AIMS OF BLACK STUDIES AT LOOMIS SCHOOL

The following statement of objectives was taken from the course syllabus issued to all students at the beginning of the fall term.

"1. To get some background of the history of black culture in Africa . . . government, family structure, economics, art, architecture, and other facets of Black History to show that Afro-Americans do have a past. (A little African geography, Sub-Saharan, is included.)

2. To show, through contemporary works, some of the issues that face (and have faced) black people in America.

3. To dispel some of the myths held about Africa, ancient and contemporary, and to show how the myths arose and were perpetuated.

4. To keep newsworthy items from the daily press and other sources before us to see what the present scene is like.

5. To examine how much of the African heritage was lost in transition."

PROCEDURE FOR ACHIEVING THE COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Lecture and assignment on, "Why Black Studies?"
2. Baldwin, James, Blues for Mr. Charlie
3. Brown, Claude, Manchild in the Promised Land
4. Duberman, In White America
5. Map of Africa
6. Movie: "South Africa: Fruit of Fear"
7. Bohannan, Paul, Africa and Africans
8. Sound strip film, "Africa in Ferment"
9. Mr. Peter Stevens, talk and slides on present-day Nigeria
10. Film, "Black History; Lost, Stolen or Strayed"
11. Film, "The Hunters"
12. Film, "Dr. Leakey and the Dawn of Man"
13. Moore and Dunbar, Africa Yesterday and Today (pp. 1-150)
14. Vachel Lindsay's poe, "The Congo"
15. Items from newspapers and periodicals:

"Our Other Man in Algiers" NYT 11/1/70
"Apartheid Still Won't Work" by Alan Paton, NYT 10/31/70
"Is Black Beautiful to Africans?" by John Akar (Sierre Leone, Ambassador to U.S.) NYT 10/31/70
"Dr. Onabanjo Hints coming of Superman" by Louis Martin, Chicago Daily Defender 10/10/70
"Only 3 Black Head Top 50 U.S. Firms: 3,179 Are White" Defender, 10/10/70
"Good Omens of Change" editorial in the Daily Defender, 10/10/70
Newsweek--"Black Capitalism--A Study in Frustration" 9/28/70
"White People Scared" NYT, 10/31/70
"Black Voters Abandoned by Whites in Key States"
"Centuries of Discrimination" by Earl Warren, NYT, 10/31/70
"DuSable Musuem Exhibits Prize Afro-American Sport Treasures" Daily Defender, 10/10/70
"Diggs Report" Daily Defender, 10/10/70 (Non-alignment in Africa.)
"College Board Reform" NYT, 11/2/70
"Jensenism--How Much Can We Boost I.Q. and Scholastic Achievement?" NYT, April 21, 1969
"Appeal by Black Americans Against U.S. Support of the Zionist Government of Israel" NYT, 11/1/70

"Jazz, Jitter and Jam" NYT 10/31/70
Woodward, C. Van, "American History (White Man's Version) Needs and Infusion of Soul" NYT 4/20/69
"Look Who's Working on the Railroad" 11/9/70 NYT
"Black Colleges are Held Ignored" 11/10/70 NYT

QUESTIONNAIRE

"Remembering the goals of the term, which of the above were most successful and which the least successful in fulfilling those goals? Be as thoughtful and constructive as you can, answering with at least a sentence or two on 'why' you thought each was successful or unsuccessful.

Class Discussions:

Do you think they were handled well or not? If 'yes,' why? If 'no,' how could they be improved?

Writing Assignments:

Did you like the kind of topics given or suggested? What other kinds of written assignments would you suggest?

Theme Conferences:

Were they worthwhile? Support your answer with a sentence or two.

The Themes of Purposes of this Term:

Do you feel the goals were significant and that there were worthwhile topics to investigate?

List topics that you think might well be included in the course.

If you are unhappy about the course and none of the above gives you a chance to express your ideas, give your reasons here . . . content? Presentation? Reading? . . ."

AIMS OR PURPOSES OF THE FALL TERM

Do you feel that they were significant and worthwhile topics to investigate? Did you learn anything . . .? (Student Reaction)

1. "Yes I learned about black culture in Africa and now I have better arguments to use against any person with a racist attitude."

2. "Good but not sufficient . . . should be more on how life in America influenced black culture and how blacks have influenced non-black American culture."

3. "The material and subject were extremely good and the history, of course, was something that is greatly needed."

4. "One of the very first subjects we should have discussed is a very basic one, 'Why is there prejudice when fear seems to have been wiped out?' Fear has been given to us as the reason for prejudice but I don't see much fear."

5. "I think many of the goals of the term were worthwhile. I must admit that I didn't know that lions never lived in jungles. Some of the topics could have been further delved into, i.e., Jensenism and MANCHILD . . . however, this term also included much information which we already knew about, i.e., Blues and Earl Warren's article."

6. "Well, from what I understand, this term was supposed to be about ancient Africa and her civilizations. In this respect the goals were met. I'm not sure about the next term, but I think a contemporary opinion should be the main goal, with happenings of today."

7. "I think this course should be Afro-American History. Therefore, we should investigate the history of the blacks in America and Africa, instead of all Africa, and just study the parts where Afro-Americans came from and maybe a small part on the other parts of Africa."

8. "I think the goals were significant and worthwhile . . . the problem was time. We needed more time to formulate ideas on the subject."

9. "I can justify a plan such as this. These are basics which have to be learned before truly understanding the reasonings and history of present-day problems. Some are too anxious to jump into the present day before getting a background in history. I wish we could compromise because I'm stuck in the middle."

LIST TOPICS YOU THINK MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN THE COURSE

1. The story of the ghetto.
2. Panthers, Muslims, Malcolm X, and Soul on Ice.
3. Study of Black education over the years.
4. Black rejection of whiteness.

5. The different Civil Rights organizations.
6. Speakers (several times).
7. The Chicago riots, for example.
8. Black studies as it relates to us today.
9. Blacks and politics.
10. Blacks place in society
11. Black religion and its changes over the years.
12. Different aspects of black culture today . . . dancing, cooking, music, literature, fashions, and family.
13. African art and music and it changes over the years.
14. Black plays such as the Great White Hope.
15. Urban situation
16. Integration and segregation.
17. Myths about Afro-Americans, how they arose and why they arose, etc. (myths appeared several times).
18. Present white views toward black and vice-versa.
19. Books and other materials which are relevant to Black Man in America.
20. An interview with some Black leaders in Hartford.
21. A trip to an all black high school. What are the differences? This would help us to understand the average black in America today.
22. How to overcome the black-white struggle.
23. Examples of present day prejudice against blacks which go unnoticed in today's "liberal" America, i.e., against black athletes.
24. Atrocities against blacks in remote areas of America (Appalachia).
25. Pressures on blacks in their everyday lives.
26. How does life at Loomis relate to blacks?

THE THIRD WORLD - 1969-1971

MILTON ACADEMY

MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS

By Mr. Barclay Feather

A happy concatenation of curriculum need, departmental guilt, and teacher rashness helped to create our new, optional offering to freshmen for 1969-1970.

In order to introduce more flexibility in the ninth grade year, by means of a wider choice of courses, the Curriculum Committee invited the History Department to make a proposal. We, in turn, had long felt remiss at nowhere in our teaching treating the historical development of such crucial elements of world society as Africa, Latin America and southern Asia.

Significant also at this juncture - June, 1969 - was the opportunity one of us had to attend an ABC/ISTS (A Better Chance/Independent Schools Talent Search) Conference at Suffield Academy, Suffield, Connecticut, where we were professionally introduced to the exciting work currently being done in classical African history.

So, with little more than fired imagination, great good intent, and full notes on Prof. Playthell Benjamin's thorough-going lectures held close, we established a basic pattern for the course we had begun by calling Developing Nations but now term The Third World.

In general, we devote a trimester each to Africa, Latin America and India. Within that brief span we study, first and most extensively, the traditional history of the area. Next, the impact of Europe and, where relevant, the United States (the first and second worlds) is considered; this quite briefly. Finally, to the extent possible, we search the contemporary scene for problems common to developing nations.

Specifically, our objectives for this, the second year the course has been given, are:

1. To discover the nature of the advanced, traditional civilizations which were created in Africa, Latin America, and India.

2. To understand how the first and second worlds affected these societies.

3. Briefly, to learn the present stage of development of the areas.

4. To work toward the mastery of such student skills as effective study, clear oral and written expression, and thoughtful reading.

In the detailed description that follows, we confine ourselves to the term of the course which is most apposite to Afro-American history.

To answer the initial focus question, "What were the principal characteristics of the early African cultures?" we have used the following readings:

-African Kingdoms, Basil Davidson (Time-Life Books, 1966; "Great Ages of Man" series). Written by a recognized authority and strikingly illustrated, this book, we feel, does not have sufficient chronological structure for ninth graders. Next year we will probably use Ancient African Kingdoms, Margaret Shinnie (Mentor, 1965).

-Africa: Selected Readings, Fred Burke (Houghton Mifflin, 1969; "World Regional Studies" series). This has excellent, short, contemporary accounts which follow the same pattern as the companion volume, Africa, also by Fred Burke. Excellent for background reading is African Myths and Tales, edited by Susan Feldmann (Laurel, 1963).

"What was the nature of the impact of Europe and the United States on traditional African society?" is the basic question for the second phase of the course. Again, we read in Burke, also the Life Educational Reprint #46, Origins of Segregation, excerpts from Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1518-1865, Daniel P. Mannix and Malcolm Cowley (Viking, 1962). We also use the Jackdaw, The Slave Trade and Its Abolition: A Collection of Contemporary Documents, compiled and edited by John Langdon-Davies (Jonathan Cape, London, 1965).

Independent country-studies are carried out in the Library as the third component of the course, researching answers to the question, "What are the most critical problems currently being faced by various African nations?" Standard reference materials are used, including The Reader's Guide and The New Nations of Africa, Ben Wattenberg and Ralph Lee Smith (Hart, 1963). In addition, An Atlas of African Affairs, Andrew Boyd and Patrick von Rensburg (rev. ed., Praeger, 1965) is on reserve in the Library, and such periodicals as Current History and Africa Report, especially, have been found to be useful.

Supplementary to their work in the Library, students are asked to read one of: Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe (McDowell, Obolenski,

1959); or The Lonely African, Colin Turnbull (Clarion, 1962); or The Dark Child, Camara Laye (Noonday Press, 1954).

We also assign a map project, and we benefitted from guest lectures by a science department colleague on geologic time and another who had travelled in Africa. A returned Peace Corpsman added a further touch of reality by speaking in native costume.

Student reaction seems to be generally favorable, although, as always, it is difficult to get a definitive reading. Whereas last year there was a single section of 19 students, the course now consists of 48 boys in three groups, which result, of course, is subject to many interpretations. Nevertheless, students do respond interestedly to the variety of form and content in the course, and some even make the claim that they have learned something new!

We believe that we have at least made a beginning; we can claim no more. Yet with continuing evaluation and revision we are hopeful that the start will lead to a conclusive course on a critical subject. We are ever grateful to Dr. Jane Martin, our colleague in the Girls' School, who has guest-lectured to the course, patiently consulted with us, and given bibliographical aid like Suggested Readings in the Literature of Africa, The Board of Education of the City of New York - a thoroughly annotated and classified listing for grades K-12 - and African Bibliographic Center, P.O. Box 13096, Washington, D.C. 20009, editors of A Current Bibliography on African Affairs, in a series of topical reading lists, and other specialized reference tools for African studies.

AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY

MOUNT HERMON SCHOOL

MOUNT HERMON, MASSACHUSETTS

By Gerald N. Davis
Department of History

UNIT I: The African Heritage of the Black American: Pre-Colonial Cultural Centers - 500-1500 A.D.

General Aim:

To ascertain the nature, stimulus, and quality of early African civilizations. (Western Sudan, Congo, and Zambabwe)

Specific Aims:

To understand the concept of "Culture."
To learn about the values, mores, and norms of the people of these civilizations.
To learn about the material wealth and economic system.
To understand the relationships between African Kingdoms and other areas of the world.
To understand the role of the physical environment in the shaping of these cultures.

Readings:

Davidson, Basil, History of West Africa
Lost Cities of Africa
Murdock, George P., Africa, Its People and Their Culture
Fage, J.D., An Atlas of African History
Seligman, C.G., The Races of Africa
Bovil, E.W., Golden Trade of the Moors
Herskovits, M., Dahomey (2 Volumes)
The Myth of the Negro Past

Problems for Discussion:

To what degree did the physical environment of tropical Africa influence the civilizations that developed?

What was the source of wealth for the kingdoms of the Western Sudan?

What are the major distinguishing features between Ghana, Mali, and Songhay?

Compare and contrast the Western Sudan Kingdoms with the civilizations of Manicongo and the Great Zambabwe.

What was the relationship between these cultures and other African and non-African civilizations?

Seminar Question:

Between 500-1600, West African society was transformed from a condition of primitive subsistence to a new level of political, religious, economic, and social sophistication. Which force, the religion of Islam or the trans-Saharan Trade, was most responsible for this transformation?

Films:

Heritage of the Negro, NET, B&W, 30 Min.
Negro Kingdoms of Africa's Golden Age, Atlantis Productions, color, 17 Min.
Dr. Leakey and the Dawn of Man, Encyclopedia Britannica Films, B&W, 30 Min.

UNIT II: The African Slave Trade and the Origin of Racism

General Aim:

To understand the historic roots of slavery, its Changing nature or character, and the growth of the African slave trade.

Specific Aims:

To learn the character of slavery in the Ancient world.
To define the changing status of the slave.
To understand the forces which caused European exploration and expansion.
To understand the traditional African system of slavery.
To understand the operation of the Atlantic slave trade.

Readings:

Davidson, Basil, The African Slave Trade
History of West Africa
Mannix, Daniel, Black Cargoes
Williams, Eric, Capitalism and Slavery
Franklin, John H., From Slavery to Freedom
DuBois, W.E.B., The Suppression of the African Slave Trade
Puzzo, Dante, (mimeo) "Origin of Racism"

Problems for Discussion:

How and why was the traditional African slave system different from the modern (1500-1863) European and American slave systems?

To what extent did the Renaissance contribute to the creation of the modern institution of slavery?

Which phase of the slave trade was most dehumanizing; the original capture in Africa, the middle passage, or the auction block trauma in the Americas?

Explain why the Caribbean area became the first area for the practice of slavery in the new world.

Why did the African become the chief or main source of slave labor in the new world? Why not Indians or Europeans?

Seminar Question:

Which factor, the development of European Racism or the economic pressures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was most responsible for the growth of the African Slave Trade into a large and regular system of international trade?

Films:

Heritage of the Negro, NET, B&W, 30 Min.

UNIT III: The "peculiar institution" of Negro Slavery in North America

General Aim:

To understand the nature of chattel slavery, and its influence upon the cultural development of black and white Americans.

Specific Aims:

To understand the origin of Negro slavery during the colonial period.
To understand the life of the rural plantation slave and the urban slave or contract worker.
To understand the position of the federal and state governments toward the institution of slavery.
To assess the profitability of slavery as an economic institution.
To ascertain the effects of slavery upon the white psyche and the black self-image.
To learn how the slaves reacted to their status and treatment.

Readings:

Elkins, S. Slavery
Stampp, K., The Peculiar Institution
Wade, R., Slavery in the Cities
Olmstead, Frederick, Law, The Cotton Kingdom (Knopf, 1953)

Phillips, Ulrich B., American Negro Slavery
Life and Labor in the Old South
Franklin, John H., From Slavery to Freedom
Botkin, B.A., (editor) Lay My Burden Down
Douglass, Frederick, Autobiography
Porter, K., (mimeo) "Negroes in Rebellion"
Mclaughlin, (mimeo) "Spirituals and the Far Side of Jordon"
Bauer, R., (mimeo) "Day to Day Resistance to Slavery"
Gray, T., (mimeo) "Confessions of Nat Turner"

Problems for Discussion:

Slavery expanded rapidly after 1807, even though the importation of slaves was prohibited by Federal legislation. How do you account for this?

Although most poor whites in the ante-bellum south were as bad off economically as the slaves, they seldom had a kind word for their black co-worker or a common cause with him. Explain?

Negro Slavery was essentially a southern institution but Negro degradation was a national phenomenon as early as the 1600's. Explain?

Were most slaves content to remain with a kind master or to face freedom and its degrees of economic insecurity?

Films:

Slavery, B&W, 30 Min., NET
Slavery and Slave Resistance, color, 26 Min., N.Y. Times

UNIT IV: The Struggle for the Emancipation of Black America

General Aim:

To understand the various factions and forces involved in the Anti-slavery and Abolitionist crusade, and to determine their effectiveness as revolutionaries.

Specific Aims:

To understand the condition of the free black population and to ascertain their role in the anti-slavery cause.
To learn about the major black abolitionists.
To understand the colonizationists, and the reactions of blacks to their plans.
To understand the relations between white abolitionists and blacks in general.
To understand the impact of abolitionism upon sectionalism
To assess the role of blacks in the Civil War.

Readings:

Douglass, F., Autobiography: (Life and Times of)
Litwack, L., North of Slavery
Elkins, S., Slavery
Quarles, B., Black Abolitionists
Thomas, J., (editor) Slavery Attacked
Ruchames, L., (editor) Abolitionists
Aptheker, H., The Negro in the Abolitionists Movement
Buckmaster, H., Let My People Go
Franklin, J.H., From Slavery to Freedom
Tyler, A., Freedoms Ferment

Problems for Discussion:

Which man do you feel was the most powerful force in the abolitionist movement: Frederick Douglass, William L. Garrison, Theodore D. Weld, or Reverend Finney?

What do you feel were the most effective arguments used by the abolitionists to gain support for their crusade?

According to many ante-bellum southerners, the Republican Party founded in 1854, was an abolitionist party. Do you agree or disagree?

Many historians agree that John Brown's raid in 1859 made it clear that violence was the only way to end slavery. How do you feel about this view?

Seminar Question:

Northern Anti-Slavery and Abolitionist leaders should have concentrated their energies on improving the condition of the slaves as opposed to pursuing the unrealistic goal of complete abolition of slavery. Test the validity of this statement.

Films:

Slavery and Slave Resistance, color, 26 Min., N.Y. Times

UNIT V: Reconstruction, Revolution, and Redemption in the Southern States

General Aim:

To understand the many problems involved in bringing the South back into the Union, and to determine the success or failure of the leaders in protecting the economic, political, and social rights of the black ex-bondsmen.

Specific Aims:

To understand the Lincoln and Johnson plan for the readmission of the southern rebellious states.
To understand the congressional reconstruction program.
To understand the constitutional question raised.
To ascertain the effects of the reconstruction programs on the condition of ex-slaves.
To understand the role of black leaders in the new southern governments.
To understand how and why the gains made by the new governments were undermined.

Readings:

Franklin, J.H., Reconstruction
Stampp, K., The Era of Reconstruction
Bentley, G., A History of the Freedmen's Bureau
DuBois, W.E.B., Black Reconstruction
Bennett, L., Black Power
Cash, W., Mind of the South
Frasier, E.F., The Negro Family in the United States
Vann Woodward, C., The Strange Career of Jim Crow
Reunion and Reaction

Problems for Discussion:

How effectively would the Lincoln plan solve the problems that existed for all the groups involved?

How and why did Congress wrest control of the reconstruction process from President Johnson?

How effective were the new "radical" government in the southern states in dealing with existing problems?

Some have said that the radical republicans tired of looking after the rights of the freedman, and abandoned them to the Southern "redeemers." Do you agree with this view?

Seminar Question:

The reconstruction of the old confederacy was a tragic failure. Instead of solving the problems of the war-torn South, the reconstruction programs created new problems which further divided the region from the rest of the nation. Challenge or defend this statement.

Films:

KKK: An Invisible Empire, B&W, 60 Min.
Free At Last, B&W, 30 Min., NET

UNIT VI: The Emergence of National Black Leadership: 1890-1920

General Aim:

To understand the distinguishing characteristics, ideas, and qualities between Booker Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, James W. Johnson, and Marcus A. Garvey; and to determine which man provided the best leadership for the black man's struggle.

Specific Aims:

To learn about the early background of these leaders.
To understand the relationship between these men and the national political leaders.
To learn about the condition of blacks, North and South.
To understand how black people felt about these men.

Readings:

Washington, B.T., Up From Slavery
DuBois, W.E.B., Souls of Black Folk
The Negro Problem
Johnson, J.W., Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man
Garvey, Marcus, (mimeo) "Aims and Objects of the U.N.I.A."
Amy Jacques, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey
Cronon, Edmund, Black Moses: The story of Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association
Baker, Raymond S., Following the Color Line

Problems for Discussion:

Booker T. Washington was essentially a self-made man. To what degree is this responsible for his philosophy?

It has been said that W.E.B. DuBois all but excluded the lower class blacks from his major area of concern, i.e., the "talented tenth." Do you agree or disagree?

How practical was Marcus Garvey's plan to remove all blacks in America back to Africa in the early twentieth century?

Seminar Question:

Which one of the following national black leaders do you feel offered the best possible leadership to his black brothers

during the period 1890 to 1920? Why not the others?

a. Booker T. Washington
b. W.E.B. DuBois
c. James W. Johnson
d. Marcus A. Garvey

Films:

Free At Last, B&W, 30 Min., NET
George W. Carver, B&W, 12 Min., Indiana Univ.
Paul Lawrence Dunbar, color, 14 Min.

UNIT VII: Dark Ghetto: Its Development, Dynamics, and Dependence.

General Aim:

To understand how and why black ghettos developed and were sustained; and to test the quality and viability of their economic and political institutions, and to learn about the values and aspirations of their residents.

Specific Aims:

To understand the reasons and patterns of black migration.
To learn about the employment opportunities in Northern urban centers.
To trace the development of black political leaders.
To ascertain the effects of Northern city life on the black family structure.
To understand the social dynamics of the ghetto.
To understand the pathology of the ghetto.

Readings:

Osofsky, G., Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto
St. Clair Drake, Black Metropolis (Chicago)
Gosnell, H., Negro Politicians (Chicago)
Frasier, E.F., The Negro Family in the United States
Clark, K., Dark Ghetto
Miller, W., Cool World
Brown, C., Manchild in the Promise Land
Reid, Ira De A., The Negro Immigrant
Rudwick, M., Race Riot at East St. Louis
McKay, Claude, Harlem: Negro Metropolis
Johnson, James W., Black Manhattan

Problems for Discussion:

Did the early black migrants to the Northern cities find an improved economic, social, and political situation for themselves?

Do you agree that the black ghetto and the white suburban community actually represent two separate cultures? If not, why not? If you agree, discuss these two cultures.

Discuss the circumstances and factors that changed Harlem from the virtual Negro Utopia in the 1920's portrayed by James Weldon Johnson to the Harlem of today.

How do you feel the black politicians from the ghetto could better serve their constituency?

Seminar Question:

The tragedy of the Dark Ghetto lies not in the fact that its people are ethnically homogeneous, but stems rather from the conscious and unconscious efforts of the surrounding white community to maintain the ghetto in its static, dependent, and colonial condition. Discuss this statement in essay form.

Films:

Superfluous People, B&W, 60 Min., WCBS
The Way It Is, B&W, 30 Min., Traveler's Ins.Co., Hartford, Ct.

UNIT VIII: The Black Revolution: From Civil Rights to Black Power

General Aim:

To trace the changing character of the Civil Rights movement from a struggle dominated by Martin L. King and white liberal funds, to a Black Power Revolution dominated by no national black leader.

Specific Aims:

To understand the influence of the cold war and the African nationalist movements on the Civil Rights struggle in America.
To understand and appreciate the philosophy of the various leaders.
To understand the tactics and methods employed by the various organizations.
To understand the attitudes and reactions of white America to this non-violent black struggle,
To understand the nature of the gains made by the non-violent protest.

To understand the growing militancy among blacks.
To understand the concept of "Black Power."
To ascertain the effectiveness of violence as a tactic.
To understand the various separatists groups.

Readings:

Carmichael & Hamilton, Black Power
Lomax, L., The Negro Revolt
Marine, G., The Black Panthers
Lincoln, C.E., The Black Muslims
Barbour, F., (editor) The Black Power Revolt
Wish, H., (editor) Negro Since Emancipation
Cleaver, E., Soul on Ice
Lecky & Wright, (editors) Black Manifesto

Mimeographs

King, M.L., "Letter From a Birmingham Jail"
Rustin, B., "Myths of the Black Revolution" Ebony, Aug. '69
Newton, Heuy, "The Black Panthers" Ebony, Aug. '69
Conyers, J., "Politics and the Black Revolution" Ebony, Aug. '69

Problems for Discussion:

Some authorities date the civil rights movement from 1955 when the Montgomery Bus Boycott began. Do you agree?

How do you account for the popularity of Rev. M.L. King, Jr. among both white and black Americans?

Some critics have charged the civil rights movement with doing little more than opening up a few lunch counters and theaters where the black middle class could spend their money with dignity. How do you feel about this view?

Marcus Garvey who advocated black power and separatism was considered an impractical visionary by many of his contemporaries. How realistic or idealistic are the present black power leaders?

Many experts have predicted that freedom, justice and equality for blacks and other minority groups can only be achieved by a very broadly based coalition of progressive white leaders and non-white spokesman, working through the existing system. How do your views of the future of the black struggle compare to the above one?

TOPICS IN AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY

WINTER TERM COURSE--1970

A tentative outline of major and minor topics to be covered during the term.

I. African Heritage of the Black American
   A. The great empires and kingdoms of early Africa.
   B. The traditional culture of West Africa.

Text: Clark, Leon (editor) Through African Eyes: The African Past and the Coming of the European

II. The Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Americas.
   A. Origin of European racism.
   B. Economic pressures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
   C. Negro slavery: North and South America.

Text: Franklin, John H., From Slavery to Freedom; and Bennett, L., Before the Mayflower.

III. The development of national black leadership.
   A. The reconstruction era
   B. Background and philosophy of Booker T. Washington
   C. " " " " W.E.B. DuBois
   D. " " " " James Weldon Johnson
   E. " " " " Marcus A. Garvey

Text: Franklin, John H. (editor) Three Negro Classics

IV. The Black Revolution: 1955-
   A. Roots of the modern struggle
   B. The Civil Rights Movement
   C. The Black Power Revolt
   D. Black Separatism

Text: Carmichael and Hamilton, Black Power
Barbour, F., The Black Power Revolt
Franklin, J. H., From Slavery to Freedom

Films: Will be shown to supplement the readings and class discussions.

AFRICAN STUDIES--UNIT OUTLINE

Units are taught in the order that they are listed here.

UNIT I: The Physical Environment

a. Rivers and valleys
b. Climate and vegetation
c. Natural resources
d. Soils
e. Diseases and pests

Kimble, George H.T., Tropical Africa Vol. I
Fordham, The Geography of African Affairs

Discussions in the unit center around the theme of the influence of the physical setting on the development of culture. Map assignments given, and films and slides are used to supplement the regular readings.

UNIT II: The Structure of African Cultures

A. Ethnic groups
   1. Physical characteristics
   2. Language groups
B. Units of traditional society
   1. The family
   2. The clan
   3. The village
   4. The tribe
C. The land, the people, a way of life.
   1. Food gathering
   2. Crop cultivation
   3. Pastoralism
   4. Systems of land tenure
   5. The modern economy

Kimble, Tropical Africa Vol. I.; Moore and Dunbar Africa Yesterday and Today; Herskovits, The Human Factor in Changing Africa; Busia, The Challenge of Africa; Achebe, Things Fall Apart.

This is a very long unit; it is designed to show the student how diverse the many cultures in Africa are; but also to point out the similarities they share. The effect that modernization has had on the traditional culture is also stressed. The whole concept of Culture is discussed thoroughly.

UNIT III: Early African History--A.D., 300-1500

A. Kingdoms, Empires and Civilizations
   1. Western Sudan
   2. Eastern Sudan
   3. East African Coastal States
   4. Zimbabwe

Davidson, History of West Africa; Davidson, History of East and Central Africa.

In this unit the focus is on the factors responsible for the growth of these kingdoms and also the reasons for their decline.

UNIT IV: Europeans come to Africa: The Growth of the Slave Trade

A. Slavery in the Ancient World	Hayes, History of Europe
B. The rise of Modern Europe	Kohn, Nationalism
1. Mercantilism	Puzzo, "Origin of Racism"
2. Nationalism	Davidson, The African Slave Trade
3. Exploration	Wiedner, History of Africa
C. European racism	Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom
D. The Slave Trade	

In this unit students are searching for the factors causing the European invasion of Africa; Why Europeans came to view the Africans on African societies.

UNIT V: European Colonial Systems: The Division of Africa

A. The British policy	Wiedner, History of Africa; Hatch, Africa Today and Tomorrow; Kimble, Tropical Africa Vol. II; Quigg, Africa; Turnbull, The Lonely African
B. The French "	
C. The Belgian "	
D. The Portuguese "	
E. African reactions	

The aim of this unit is to evaluate the various colonial policies employed in Africa, and to determine the constructiveness or destructiveness of these policies.

UNIT VI: The Development of African Nationalism

A. Growth factors	Kimble, Tropical Africa Vol. II
B. Leadership	Hatch, History of Postwar Africa
C. Organizations	Emerson & Kilson (ed) The Political Awakening of Africa
D. Methods	Hunter, New Societies of Tropical Africa
E. Goals	

Each student is required to write his or her interpretation of African Nationalism, on the basis of the unit readings, and lectures.

UNIT VII: The Problems of Independence

A. The problem of power and authority	African Forum has many pertinent aricles; Fall, 1965; Current articles are obtained from Africa Report; Africa Today; The Journal of Modern African Studies
B. Economic development	
C. Reluctant decline of traditionalism	
D. Neo-colonialism	
E. Inter-African unity	
F. Africa and the World System	

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African Literature

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2. Fieldman, Susan, African Myths and Tales, N.Y., Dell, 1963. "An original collection of wonderful stories about men and animals and gods, about supernatural events and everyday happenings, of love, hate, jealousy, trickery and magic."

3. Conton, William, The African, N.Y., Signet, 1961. An interesting novel by an African writer.

4. O'Donnell, Eugene, The Night Cometh, N.Y., The Berkley Publishing Co., 1960. An excellent novel which reveals the evil of the South African Apartheid system.

5. Mphahlele, Ezekiel, African Image, N.Y., Praeger, 1962. One of the best novels published by an African.

6. Achebe, Chinua, Things Fall Apart. Perhaps the finest novel published by an African thus far.

Textbooks

7. Wiedner, Donald L., A History of Africa South of the Sahara, N.Y., Vintage, 1964. A good explanation of the origins of colonialism but a rather general discussion of the nationalists movements. (Paper)

8. Hatch, John, Africa Today and Tomorrow, N.Y., Praeger, 1964 (Paper). A good account of each colony, state and trust territory, written by political scientists.

9. Church, R. J. Harrison, Africa and the Islands, N.Y., John Wiley & Sons, 1964. A good standard text giving general information on the entire continent; a good reference book.

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STATEMENTS ON BLACK LITERATURE

The following papers by Dr. Charles H. Nichols and Mr. Wendell A. Jeanpierre were prepared for a workshop which was to have been held at the Afro-American Resource Center at the Choate School in the fall of 1970. When the workshop was cancelled, we were concerned that these important statements would not be communicated to our schools; therefore, we are pleased to have this opportunity to bring them to your attention.

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THE BLACK PICARESQUE IN FICTION

By Dr. Charles H. Nichols

Stuart Miller, in The Picaresque Novel (p. 131) writes: "A picaresque novel is a novel with an episodic plot. The episodic plot, together with the fortune pattern, the accident motif, and the rush of events pattern, projects a universe in a state of chaos. This universe is different from the worlds implied by patterns of action in romance, comedy, tragedy, and the realistic novel because the plot patterns in these types of fiction are different.

The hero of the picaresque novel differs from characters in other types of fiction. His origins are uncertain. He becomes a rogue in a world full of roguery. His roguery differs from comic roguery in being gratuitous. He cannot love or feel strong emotion; he is incapable of anchoring his personality to some idea or ideal of conduct. His internal chaos is externally reflected in his protean roles. This instability of personality is seen in the picaresque novel as a reflection of the outer chaos discovered by the plot patterns. The picaresque character is not merely a rogue, and his chaos of personality is greater than any purely moral chaos. It reflects a total lack of structure in the world, not merely a lack of ethical or social structure." (P. 131) What relation does this genre bear to the picaresque forms in Afro-American writing?

A study of the autobiographies of Afro-Americans enables the reader to grasp the bitterness and intensity of their lives and the humanity of those who wrestle so mightily against cynicism and destruction. For the literary critic this study is an essential step as we analyze the ways in which the existential experience is transmuted into subtler and more creative fictional forms.

The Black Experience in Autobiography

Autobiographical writings like Black Boy and The Autobiography of Malcom X are intense, passionate revelations of the deepest conflicts in the black experience--an experience which, when translated into fiction assumes the form of the picaresque. The distinguishing mark of the black picaroon is that his fate is determined not only by class, but more importantly by caste status. The "Negro" wrote James Baldwin" is absolutely

necessary to American society as showing in a constantly shifting populace where the bottom is." Black Boy is the modern archetype of the life of an American "freedman." It illustrates vividly how effectively the South restored the status quo ante by an elaborate system of taboos, restraints and invidious distinctions sanctioned by law and enforced by ruthless violence against the posterity of the exslaves. The Southern politicians and their white constituents not only wished to ensure their own political and economic supremacy; they set out to destroy the black man's identity and individuality to reduce him to a pre-individual state, to rob him of his humanity. The system insisted on total obedience and submission.

Richard Wright's account of his childhood, Black Boy achieves its stunning impact by dramatizing the collision of a vigorous, imaginative and daring youth with a family and a society which set out to stamp out his individuality. His first awareness is of a family setting so cramping and lacking in spiritual nourishment that he is driven to outrageous acts of defiance by its cold hostility. His humble origins with his parents do not spare him the jeopardy of the picaroon (like Lazarillo) for he is hungry, cold and deprived. Indeed his experience is the more alienating precisely because his own mother and the father (who soon abandons the family) are the first to repress his normal curiosity and assertiveness. From the very outset his contact with his environment is traumatic. He is beaten and robbed by gangs, insulted and terrified by whites and sharply restricted in all his movements. At the age of six he finds himself drunk in a local tavern and a frightened observer of the ghetto's underworld life. The next phase of his life is spent with an austere Calvinistic grandmother whose stern admonitions against sin turn his guilt and hostility against himself and alienate him completely from any human warmth or affection. By the time he was compelled to confront the public school and his vicious white employers in cities like Jackson and Memphis, he was a lost soul, bitterly estranged from his relatives, the black community and the larger society. Each day's ordeals brought him to the brink of that vast chasm beyond which lay humiliation, terror, rage and death. "There were more violent quarrels in our deeply religious home than in the home of a gangster, a burglar, or a prostitute, a fact which I used to hint gently to Granny and which did my cause no good. Granny bore the standard for God, but she was always fighting. The peace that passes understanding never dwelt with us. I, too, fought; but I fought because I felt I had to keep from being crushed, to fend off continuous attack." Thus Richard was stigmatized as a "bad boy" a sinner and a reprobate. And he played out the role with a certain gusto. Like the picaresque hero, he learned to mask his anger, to repress his natural instincts, to dissemble and conform. The price he paid was dear: a bitter alienation, a lack of identity and an incapacity for love. He writes: "Again and again I vowed that someday I would end this hunger of mine, this apartness, this eternal difference; and I did not suspect that I would never get intimately into their lives, that I was doomed to live with them but not of them ,

that I had my own strange and separate road, a road which in later years would make them wonder how I had come to tread it. I now saw a world leap to life before my eyes because I could explore it, and that meant not going home when school was out, but wandering, watching, asking, talking." (P. 111)

The cruelty of these surroundings could not stamp out the searching intelligence, the critical awareness, the love of life welling up inside this black boy. He discovered newspapers, books, the beauty of the land and the sunset and even a few friends. Like the picaro and the fugitive slave, Richard Wright dreamed "of going north and writing books, novels. The North symbolized to me all that I had not felt and seen; it had no relation whatever to what actually existed. Yet by imagining a place where everything was possible, I kept hope alive in me." (P. 147) This utopian dream was severely tested by the reality of discrimination, insult, lynching and violence. But the boy continued his rootless wandering and heartbreaking quest. "In me was shaping a yearning for a kind of consciousness, a mode of being that the way of life about me had said could not be, must not be and upon which the penalty of death had been placed."

The chaos in his life continued, however. He knocked about from one menial job to another. He remained on guard against attack by hostile whites. He avoided stealing only out of fear. As a bellboy he learned to peddle bootleg liquor. "I no longer felt bound by the laws which white and black were supposed to obey in common. I was outside those laws; the white people had told me so. Now when I thought of ways to escape from my environment I no longer felt the inner restraint that would have made stealing impossible, and this new freedom made me lonely and afraid." The brutality of the system affected him in a thousand ways. He was forced to watch his employers attack and beat a Negro woman while he (and the police) stood by and merely watched. He was forced out of a job with a firm of opticians for daring to entertain the hope of learning to be a technician. He was struck down for failing to say "sir" to white men. He is forced into a boxing match for the entertainment of whites. At last he escaped to new uncertainties in Chicago. "Not only had the southern whites not known me," he writes, "but, more important still, as I had lived in the South I had not had the chance to learn who I was." Indeed the world he had known had tossed away "the best and deepest things of heart and mind" in "blind ignorance and hate." (P. 228)

Richard Wright, compelled to preserve some rag of honor in the face of the barbarism of the South, was a "bad boy" and a rogue to his family and acquaintances. But the fact was he was a conscious rebel against an inhuman environment. Chicago led him down the road to revolution and black nationalism.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X is probably the most influential book read by this generation of Afro-Americans. For not only is the account of Malcolm Little an absorbing and heart-shattering encounter with the realities of poverty, crime and racism, it is a fantastic success story. Paradoxically, the book designed to be an indictment of American and European bigotry and exploitation, is a trimphant affirmation of the possibilities of the human spirit. Malcolm X presents us with a manifesto, a call to arms, a revolutionary document. At the same time he reveals an incredible and dogged perseverance in the face of soul-destroying limitations, a passionate eagerness to learn, a love of life, an ingenious and resourceful capacity for survival. In him the picaresque mode is given a new psychic dimension, a sense of history and a tragic force. The chaos which would engulf the protagonist here extends in ever widening circles, from the hunger, squalor and petty thievery of the street-corner to the crises in international relations and colonialism and, at last, to the vexed questions involving men's faith and their ultimate relation to the cosmos. The journey of the picaroon, Malcolm X, is from ragged obscurity to world spokesman, to charismatic leader to martyred Saint--a long, sordid, yet visionary, quest through the underworld to a vision of some just and ordered mellenmium. Thus, the black picaresque characteristically presents us with the religious agonist whose search out of poverty, deprivation and despair leads him through dreams of liberation to a transcendent sense of community.

This then is the essential meaning of The Autobiography of Malcolm X. He was born into a family of eight children in Omaha, Nebraska on May 19, 1925. He knew poverty, hunger and deprivation. But above all his family lived surrounded by a ring of hate--constant threats by the Ku Klux Klan and innumerable forms of insult and indignity. Malcolm's father, a proud, militant man and Baptist preacher, propagated the Black Nationalism of Marcus Garvey. The bigots responded by burning down the Littles' house and, at last, murdering their father. Malcolm and his brothers were separated and farmed out to relatives and friends. His mother suffered a mental breakdown and had to be hospitalized. Malcolm was sent to Lansing, Michigan and then to Boston, Massachusetts. His schooling was sporadic.

The next phase of his life led him into petty crimes--truancy, thievery, dope peddling, pimping. Like the picaroon he survived by trickery and deceit, by out-smarting others, by "hustling" his way through a vicious underground existence. At last, apprehended by the police for one of his crimes, he landed in jail by the time he was sixteen or seventeen. Then came his conversion to the Black Muslim religion of Elijah Muhammad--a curious amalgram of myth, faith, asceticism and revolutionary doctrine. The Black Muslims' over-riding goal is the liberation of black people from the thralldom and exploitation of dominant white racists. They sought not only to prepare blacks for an inevitable confrontation with the power structure, but to give them a new self-esteem and pride and the determination to establish their own nation. The experience of conversion to the Muslim faith transformed Malcolm's character. Upon his release from prison, he turned from crime and self

indulgence to reading, learning and proselytizing for the group. His first exposure to the history of slavery, discrimination and imperialism convinced him that the "white man is a devil" and that black men must not only cast off the corrupting influences of western society, but work toward a separate black state, the Nation of Islam. One is amazed by Malcolm X's zeal for learning, by the range of his intellectual interests and the far-reaching character of his organizing effort for the cause. Malcolm listened as Elijah Muhammad railed against integration and reconciliation. He dedicated himself to the same cause and represented his great leader's ideas in innumerable speeches. Then came the break. Disillusioned by evidences of immorality and adultery charged against Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X was silenced by the man who plainly felt threatened by his disciple's popularity. For Malcolm X understood the mentality of the ghetto--the strivings and conflicts of the black masses. "The black man in North America was spiritually sick because for centuries he had accepted the white man's Christianity--which asked the black so-called Chrisitian to expect no true Brotherhood of man but to endure the cruelties of the white so-called Christianity had made black men fuzzy, nebulous, confused in their thinking. . .he wrote, "The black man in North America was economically sick. . . as a consumer he got less than his share, and as a producer gave least. In New York City with over a million Negroes, there aren't twenty black-owned businesses employing over ten people. It's because black men don't own and control their own community's retail establishments that they can't stabilize their own community." (P. 313) These ideas got a wide hearing throughout the black world. The bitter disillusionment of the Negroes who had tried moral suasion, peaceful protest and non-violence only to confront dogs, clubs, guns and unjust imprisonment seized upon this new black nationalism. The assassination of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X himself changed radically the whole climate of race relations in America.

What many black nationalists and followers of Malcolm X seem to have forgotten, however, is Malcolm's pilgrimage to Mecca and the subsequent widening of his horizons. Though indefatigable in his struggle for liberation of black America, he saw the world-wide implications of oppression and exploitation. He sensed that the wretched of the earth have a common cause and that in our struggle we need allies. The life of Malcom Little outdoes the fantasies, the jeopardy, the rush of event and accident which we associate with the picaroon. The personalized essays of Eldridge Cleaver and LeRoi Jones have the same stark, rebellious impact. Fiction could hardly recapture its intensity and tragic dimension. But the imaginative writer could not fail to be enticed by the power of the black picaresque and the creative possibilities of the theme which destroyed the American union and still threatens the foundations of our national life.

It is apparent, then that the black experience itself suggested to some Afro-American writers the picaresque form when they turned to fiction. For they were conscious victims of fortuitous circumstance,

rootless and lonely men forced to survive by various strategems and protean roles. Indeed their immersion in a bitter underground life robbed them of the kind of aesthetic distance which could use the picaresque mode creatively in fiction until the 20th century. Two factors explain the flourishing of a more creative and experimental use of this fictional form in recent times: (1) The pilgrimage of the plantation Negro to the urban setting with its richer cultural contact and growing group solidarity (2) the refinement of his sensibility and the deepening of his perception which resulted from closer contact with western literary tradition. We have seen how the slave narrative created its own picaresque forms. Works like Don Quixote, Moll Flanders, Tom Jones and Huckleberry Finn suggested further variations on familiar themes. Yet these works scarcely appealed to the black writer as having depth and seriousness of the Negro experience in America. Even Moll Flanders seemed contrived and somewhat frivolous, and Tom Jones, though a bastard abandoned by his benefactors and making a shaky adjustment to a merciless London world, is never convincingly a lower class character. Huck Finn provided the most useful model in his outcast status, his perilous flight, his ingenuity in shifting roles and his subversion of the established values of the society. Yet the odor of the plantation stereotypes clung to Huck and Jim and their adventures could scarcely seem relevant to the industrial setting of 20th century ghetto life.

When we turn to the black writers, it is plain that none of them is consciously imitating the western picaresque mode, but is more influenced by the black experience (as we have seen it in autobiographies). Hence in structuring the action, character and language of their novels, they have taken for granted the essential elements of the picaresque. What they have created are comic modes and fictional forms which achieve the intensity, tension and bitter rebellion characteristic of the group's life. For the black picaroon never can escape the iron ring of his caste status. His alienation and struggle for survival are move intensely felt. He must be capable of playing numerous exacting roles, for he is the victim of accident, chaos and irrational caprice. His world conspires to oppress and unsettle him. The maxim of the society is summed up in the directive: "Keep this nigger running." The instability of his emotional life leads him into the agony and conflict of a shaky ego. Yet he has developed considerable resilience and ingenuity. His speech, his blues, his jazz, his double vision and sophisticated awareness provide a rich cultural dowry, and he is able by improvisation, disguise, irony, paradox and word play to explore means of escape to a spiritual freedom which even the traditional picaroon could not know.

The early efforts in the black picaresque were trial flights like Claude McKay's Home to Harlem. In this novel the protagonist, Jake, is a lonely wanderer stranded in Europe who goes AWOL to get back home to Harlem. He is somewhat reminiscent of Tom Jones in his irrepressible good spirits, his episodic career, his furious and hedonistic pursuit of pleasure. Drink, sex, dancing and gambling seem to fill his life, and he

wastes no time in dour reflection. He spends his time looking for his lost love, Felice. He works because he must. But he is free of self-hatred or self-pity. Especially when contrasted with his foil, the educated Ray, he seems a stereo-typed portrait of the happy-go-lucky darky. But on closer examination we discover that his roguery goes beyond mere lasciviousness and folly, for he is a fugitive and a rebel, resisting the police and refusing to serve as a scab. The picaresque characters' status is symbolized here by the persona of the pullman car porter and dining car waiter who must perform a daily balancing act on a shaky train while hurtling toward some uncertain distination. The hysterical and feverish search of Jake and Ray for some haven, some lasting human relationship never ends, and they are part of that flotsam and jetsam which the late tides will, at last, float to some abandoned shore.

It is Richard Wright, of course, who establishes the tradition and reveals something of the range of possibilities of the form. As we have seen in Black Boy he lived through the anguish of the black picaroon and could depict the extent of his estrangement and the revolutionary implications of the theme. Generally speaking, critics have described Native Son as a naturalistic novel--a bold and candid revelation of lower class life in a rat-infested ghetto, a harsh indictment of an exploitative society, a picture of those victimized by impersonal and pre-determined forces. All this is true. Yet there is more to Native Son than that. For the achievement of the novel is in Wright's success in humanizing the murderer and bully, Bigger Thomas, and giving him a tragic dimension. Bigger's humanity strikes us first of all in the nature of his roguish adjustment to his world. His obscure origins, his thievery, his pretenses and dreams, his protean roles (gang leader, chauffeur, servant, kidnapper, Black Nationalist) are picaresque. But Bigger stands out in contrast to the traditional picaroon in the intensity, stark reality and revolutionary character of his role. But his is a perilous lack of any adjustment. His behavior is plainly moving toward the pathological. He is the archetype of the Black Militant who has discovered that he is willing to pay any price for freedom--even murder and death. And his fantasies of a Black Nation, his expanding awareness of his powers and of his world raise the novel to a new order of consciousness.

In "The Man Who Lived Underground"--a long, short story, Richard Wright turns from realism to surrealism and symbolism, from the episodic tale to the interior conflicts of the psyche. For Wright's contribution is his fearful anticipation of the psychic (as well as social) perils the rebel black picaroon faces. Yet again there are elements of the picaresque which anticipate LeRoi Jones' System of Dante's Hell and that master of black picaresque, Ralph Ellison. "The man Who Lived Underground" is not named, and we learn nothing of his origins. But he is fleeing from the police and drops down a man hole into the sewer under the city. Though apparently innocent of any crime he has apparently signed a confession of murder and feels guilty. In his wanderings underground he finds a cave, a church, an undertaker's establishment, a movie house, a coal bin, a safe, a butcher shop, an office and a jeweller's. He establishes himself in a cave where he installs lights and stores the dollars, diamonds

and rings that he has stolen. For a time he has a deceptive euphoria: "He had triumphed over the world above ground! He was free! . . .He wanted to run from his cave and yell his discovery to the world." When he emerges into the street no one notices him. Compulsively he goes to the police to assure them he is a criminal and he urges them to come and see his underground cave and his stolen goods. The officers of the law think him insane. But finally they follow him to the man hole entrance and when he had descended into the maelstrom one of them shoots him. "He sighed and closed his eyes, a whirling object rushing alone in the darkness, veering, tossing, lost in the heart of the earth."

The story operates on two symbolic levels: The psychological and the social. The protagonist, like Dostoievsky's underground man is fearful, unstable, masochistic, aggressive and somewhat paranoid. His descent into the sewer brings him face to face with his own conflicts and nightmares--the awful squalor and degradation into which his ego is drowning. At the same time the offal, the dead bodies, the abortions and decay of the acquisitive and wasteful society are poorly concealed below the surface of our cities. Here the anguish and chaos of the picaroon, the outcast, cry out his indictment against the barbarism of the society which defines him as a criminal and robs him of his manhood.

Richard Wright's novel The Outsider (1953) has received little critical attention and has been dismissed by those who refer to it as an inept and poorly written novel. The book's importance to our contemporary sensibility, its prophetic and ideological significance have been much underestimated. The Outsider, written under the influence of Satre's existentialism, is nevertheless a powerful sequel to Richard Wright's central theme as we have seen it in Black Boy, Native Son and "The Man Who Lived Underground." It adds a new dimension to the black picaresque genre in its inexorable pursuit of the conflicts in the soul of the outcast, the brutalized and oppressed Negro. Wright's early writings found heroic elements in the victim-turned-assailant, by convincing us that those who challenged oppression and were defined as criminals by an unjust society had proved that the only possible stance for the black masses is one of rebellion. As Eldridge Cleaver might say that black man must not allow himself to be castrated. I am convinced that this idea owes more to his black nationalism than to Marxist ideology. In The Outsider the narrative power of the novel stems not only from the perilous and protean career of the protagonist, but from his attempt to confront the chaos about him by seizing the initiative and fashioning his own destiny. Cross Damon, a thirty-three year old Negro is divorced, has 3 children whom he loves and is surrounded by his friends and fellow postal workers. He has a love affair with a young girl who gets pregnant. Yet he is alone, rootless and alienated. His bitter quarrels with his wife, his drinking and extra-curricular sex adventures are symptomatic of his passionate but fruitless quest to find wholeness and health for a way out of his debts, his shattered marriage and the humiliations of a racist society. The opening scenes of the novel in which he is walking in the snow and constantly fleeing the cold are symbolic in this

regard. Then Cross Damon is in a subway accident, his coat containing his identification papers which he has taken off in attempting to extricate himself from the wreck falls near a Negro who resembles him. To his amazement he discovers that the next day's newspapers report him among the dead. He reads his own obituaries and watches his own funeral from a safe distance. It is then that he decides to seize the opportunity to blot out his miserable past and create a new identity. "All of his life he had been hankering after his personal freedom, and now freedom was knocking at his door, begging him to come in. He shivered in the cold. . . "The numerous disguises and changing roles of the picaroon suggest how hungrily the search for a new identity characterizes these persons. Not only is this symptomatic of the instability of the personality concerned (which is deeply involved in an identity crisis) but it suggests the chaos and jeopardy which haunts them. Cross Damon flees to New York, adopts various names and stolen credentials. He commits four murders to protect his real self from discovery and suffers the constant agony and fear of the fugitive. "Now depending only upon his lonely will, he saw that to map out his life entirely, upon his own assumptions was a task that terrified him, just to think of it, for he knew that he first had to know what he thought life was . . .The question summed itself up: What's a man? He had unknowingly set himself a project of no less magnitude than contained in that awful question." (P. 83) Cross Damon thinks that in abandoning his old identity he is free to choose to be anyone he likes. But eventually discovers that he has greatly increased the chaos and sickness in his own heart. For he is not a man at all without an identity; he is a ghost, a spook.

Moreover, he determines not only to manipulate and fashion his own life, but that of others. He assumes God-like prerogatives over others. His association with the Communist Party enlarges his opportunities for violating coldly the rights of others, in short, Cross Damon's mental state is pathological. He is suffering from paranoia: delusions of persecution followed by delusions of omnipotence. The Outsider is often referred to as an existentialist novel. It is, more accurately, an attack on existentialism, a daring flirtation with its tenets and a final rejection of the selfish and sick view of existentialism which Cross Damon represents. For Damon believes in nothing. "God is dead and everything is allowed." Man is a futile passion. A man is only what he makes of himself. Cross Damon says: "We 20th century Westerners have outlived the faith of our fathers; our minds have grown so skeptical that we cannot accept the old scheme of moral precepts which once guided man's life. In our modern industrial society, we try to steer our hearts by improvised, pragmatic rules which are, in the end, no rules at all . . ." Cross Damon's career dramatizes the risks faced by the black picaroon: personality disintegration, lack of identity, brutalization and at last paranoia schizophrenia. He is shot by another communist. Having stripped himself of all illusions, having dared everything to preserve himself and create his own identity, and his own law, he achieves some new insights on his death bed--insights as old as our first explorations of ethics. "I wish I had some way to give the meaning of my life to others. . . to make a bridge from man to man . . . starting from scratch every time . . . is no good. Tell them not to come down this road . . .Men hate themselves

and it makes them hate others . . . we must find some way of being good to ourselves . . . Man is all we've got . . . I wish I could ask men to meet themselves . . . Man is returning to the earth . . . The real men, the last men are coming . . ." (Pp. 439-440)

No doubt Ralph Ellison is the author who has made the most creative use of the picaresque mode. Invisible Man presents us with a protagonist who is on a lonely journey to the discovery of the self and the world which surrounds him. He is overwhelmed by the rush of events: he is a protean figure--a student, a trickster, a confidence man, a laborer, a rabble rouser, a political organizer. He goes through rehearsals of chaos and harrowing events. With a marvellous use of language, satire, symbols and comic modes, the writer carries his character through a series of epiphanies--revelations. The book is an epistemological novel, dealing as it does with our ways of perceiving and knowing truth. Ellison's character grows from naive acceptance and passive conformity through social protest, revolution and anarchy to discover at last the way to his identity. He becomes at last a man of principle. His pilgrimage through chaos, violence and hate brings him to a wholeness, a health which is based on idealism and hope.

Ellison, who was a jazz musician employs the quality of improvisation, daring and intensity characteristic of jazz. Richard Wright tells us that "blue jazz" became the Outsider's "only emotional home." Blue jazz was the scornful gesture of men turned ecstatic in their state of rejection; it was the musical language of the satisfiedly amoral, the boastrings of the contentedly lawless, the recreations of the innocently criminal." (P. 140--The Outsider) As such jazz and blues are surely a vivid evocation of the picaresque mode.

Jazz supplies the analog for Invisible Man. For Ellison's novel is an elaborately contrived, but withal improvised joke, a sustained farce, a cynical rejection of bland assumptions. He is not singing the blues, but freely exploring the possibilities of his instrument. It runs the gamut of the commonplace illusions in the racial situation and forces us by paradox, irony and satire to see where we have been blind before. Thus the narrator's grandfather, "the meekest of men," tells his son on his deathbed:

> I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country . . . Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em to death and destruction; let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open.

This death-bed counsel is a marvellous paradox which leaps to the very heart of black and white relations, for it demonstrates that the dishonest mask of submission to evil is corrosive and treacherous, the most devastating of curses. The life of the South has been blighted by it. It is the harrowing joke of all the Uncle Toms, the Step'n Fetchits, the Gitlows, the Rochesters.

The book carries the mirror-and-mask game to hilarious limits, and drives home repeatedly the point that all this furniture which clutters up the house of men has made the individual invisible. As in jazz, Ellison's book is filled with truncated and syncopated forms, unheard sounds, unconscious motives, flashes of insight. Describing the double-vision of the outcast, he writes:

"Invisibility gives one a slightly different sense of time; you're never quite on the beat. Sometimes you're ahead and sometimes behind. Instead of the swift and imperceptible flowing of time, you are aware of its nodes, those points where time stands still or from which it leaps ahead. And you slip into the breaks and look around. That's what you hear vaguely in Louis Armstrong's music. . . That night I found myself hearing not only in time but in space as well. I not only entered the music, but descended like Dante into its depths."

Invisible Man contains many bitter and harrowing events, but its mode is the comic mode. The comedy here is like that of Gogol in Dead Souls or Melville in The Confidence Man--a merciless and cynical unmasking of human selfishness and stupidity, by a sensibility so delicate and honest as to be incapable of that solemnity which often boarders on humbug. Genet in The Blacks uses this mirror-and-mask game also with stunning effect.

Thus the prologue of Ellison's novel presents the main character living alone in a coal cellar lighted by 1,369 bulbs which are powered by stolen electricity. "For," he says, "the truth is the light, and the light is the truth." Having descended after a long and meaningless quest into his own psyche, he has found the source of light, heat and power in the individual, in himself. The novel itself is the account of his fruitless search. He begins as a student who has been taught the Booker T. Washington precepts: accept your "place" in society, work hard, trust the good white people, and you will succeed. But he soon perceives that this is a system of lies and oppression and flees to the world of union solidarity and social protest. Here again, he finds the individual betrayed, and having flirted with radicalism and black nationalism, falls, by accident, into his underground room.

The situation of man in the modern world is symbolized in a variety of skillfully managed scenes. Thus, at the outset, the narrator is invited to give his graduation speech to one of the tin-pot fraternal orders at a stag party, but finds himself corralled with a group of other Negro boys who are paid to fight each other blindfolded on an electrically charged rug for the amusement of the whites. Later he is employed in a monstrous, mechanized paint factory, allows the white paint to run over, and cannot find the right valve to turn it off. Finally, he discovers, by accident, in the midst of a riot, that a hat and a pair of dark glasses so transform him that he is mistaken for Rinehart, a notorious confidence man, in three of his different disguises. In amused clownerie he plays out their roles. He discovers that "between Rinehart and invisibility

there are great potentialities." By "changing the joke," says Ellison, "we may slip the yoke." This use of wild burlesque and farcial humor emphasizes the meaninglessness and incongruity of much of our experience in modern life.

Both Baldwin and Ellison have revealed some of the variety and complexity of the Negro as an individual. They have also used Negro experience to enable us to see beyond the familiar clichés to our common humanity. With their arrival on the literary scene the Negro author seems, at last, emancipated. For the writer's freedom is in his perception of the possibilities of his art.

In this story Ellison, by these ironies reverses the stereotypes and forces us to see the absurdity and injustice of them. Thus the concealment of the main character in a coal cellar suggests not the darkness of the Anglo-Saxon connotation, but "a voice issuing its wisdom out of the substance of its own inwardness--after having undergone the transformation from ranter to writer." (Partisan Review, Vol XXV, Spring, 1958, P. 212 ff) The main characters movement downward is, in keeping with the reverse English of the plot, a process of rising to an understanding of his human condition. The main character is, in a sense, running throughout the story like many of us today. He is trying to fulfill other people's visions of himself. And in the complexity of modern life he is lost--as when working in a factory he allows the paint to overflow and cannot find the right valve, which shuts off th vast machinery. The novel suggests alternatives to the violence of one of the demagogues in the book through the use of mistaken identity: the main character discovers great freedom of action in his various disguises. But his most significant discovery is of his own possibilities. "Life is to be lived, not controlled; and humanity is won by continuing to play in face of certain defeat. Our fate is to become one, and yet many--this is not prophecy, but description. Thus one of the great jokes in the world is the spectacle of the whites busy escaping blackness and becoming blacker every day, and the blacks striving toward whiteness, becoming quite dull and gray. None of us seems to know who he is or where he's going." (P. 499)

The main characters in Invisible Man experience the indignities and cruelties caused by prejudice, but these are familiar to most literate people. The contribution of this book lies in their concern with the problem of identity. Each individual's self-realization--which is the goal and glory of a free society--is the heart of the matter." If I were asked what I considered to be the chief significance of Invisible Man," said Ralph Ellison, "I would reply its attempt to return to the mood of personal moral responsibility for democracy which typified the best of our 19th century fiction."

"NEGRITUDE"

By W. A. Jeanpierre

It is perhaps apropos to preface our examination of Negritude with the observation that the accusatory tone and systematic indictments which run throughout the works of these poets like a leitmotif, are apt to prove bewildering and offensive to those who feel themselves to be the target against which its arrows are directed. It should be kept in mind, however, that the reaction to centuries of oppression and humiliation is not one of fraternal love and calm deliberation. Jean-Paul Satre in his brilliant essay, Orphée noir (Black Orpheus,) which served as a preface to Leopold Senghor's anthology of Negritude poems, noted this when he pointed out: "What did you expect when you unmuzzled those black mouths? Did you think that they were going to chant praises to you? Did you hope to read adoration in the eyes of those whose heads were forced to the ground by our fathers? These black men are standing up now, looking straight at you, and I wish you to feel as I do the shock of being seen."

Turning then to Negritude itself, we see that its first chords were echoed by a founding triumvirate of black, French-speaking poets in Paris during the years extending from 1932 to 1935. Aime Cesaire, from the island of Martinique, Leon Damas of French Guiana (the once famous Devil's Island), and Leopold Sedar Senghor, currently President of the Republic of Senegal, Africa created the movement. It was Cesaire, one of the most gifted and lucid intelligences of our time who coined the neoligism, Negritude, in his epic prose-poem, Cahier d'un Retour au pays natal (Notes On A Return To The Native Land, which was published in Paris in 1939.

The origins of this movement, characterized by Satre as the most revolutionary poetry of our time, are anything but literary. Negritude emerged out of a way of life, European Colonialism, which fostered and cultivated a distorted image of people of African descent, and which justified its oppression and degradation of that people on the grounds that they were sub-human. The black poets and intellectuals who came together in Paris during the thirties to found and contribute to this movement finally concluded that they could not recognize in the humanism of the West all the dimensions of their own personality. They felt that only they could correctly interpret themselves, their aspirations, angers, traditions and vision of the world. They saw themselves as the Afro-American, lawyer-poet, Samuel Allen pointed out, quoting Satre, as vates or prophets, in the original Greek meaning of the term, whose role was

to give artistic expression to the suppressed aspirations of their people in the dual process of destruction and creation implicit in the formation of a new imaginative world free of the proscriptions of a colonial West.

The policy of cultural assimilation pursued by French colonialism, with a view of making its then subject peoples of color culturally French, had ingrained in these latter a deep sense of shame and contempt for things African. The Negritude poets set out to combat this policy, to ressurrect a new black man and to restore him to his natural dignity. Conditioned reflexes of servitude, inculcated by centuries of humiliation, had to be destroyed. By violently rejecting cultural assimilation, which sought to make black-skinned Frenchmen of them, and which acted as a brake on the expression of their true personality, they hoped to release their creative impulses which for too long had been strait-jacketed within the confines of the cultural imprisonment imposed by the colonial West. To achieve this end, they descended into the furthest, inner most recesses of their being to recover that lost fullness of self, a quest which Sartre compared to Orpheus' descent into Hell in search of his beloved Eurydice. To find their true identity and that lost organic view of the universe, the Negritude poets made the pilgrimage to the sources of their origin, to that mystical homeland which lay beyond the five hundred years of oppression and acculturation that had marked their stay in the New World.

This pilgrimage led back to Africa, the ancestral motherland, and to attempt to find in that Africa prior to its confrontation with Europe, a system of references and values which most faithfully reflected themselves. The identification, of course, was with the spirit, not the letter, of African civilization. And the values they sought in this Africa were to be opposed to those of the highly mechanized civilization in which they dwelled, and which, to them, was barren of any inner meaning. For Cesaire and Damas, black French West Indians who had never seen Africa, the flight was an imaginary one, and was stimulated by the findings of European ethnologists, the influence exerted by the African art which informed the artistics essays of Picasso and Derain, among others, as well as the condemnation by European intellectuals of a way of life whose values had been proven bankrupt by recurrent wars and the increasing alienation of modern man.

Simply stated, the foregoing lines indicate that the poets in question, being unable to find an acceptable identity in a culture that oppressed them, sought it elsewhere.

The literary technique they adopted in this process of destruction and creation was Surrealism. Surrealism acted as a break on cultural assimilation, for them, since it enabled them to delve beneath their imposed personality in order to discover the real self. Profoundly influenced by Freudianism, Surrealism counseled its adherents to descend into the realm of the subconscious and to spontaneously note, in artistic fashion, the

deeper truths that their vague associations, impulses, dreams and drives suggested. But the Negritude poets only used Surrealism to apply it to their condition as black men in a culture hostile and unsympathetic, basically, to their aspirations.

The term, Negritude, is in itself, highly revelatory. It was deliberately formed from the once offensive word: Nègre (Negro). The choice seems to suggest not only the determination to avoid use of the politer term Noir (Black), or as in English, Colored, but the desire of Cesaire and others to fling Nègre back full blown, into the teeth of its detractors, invested, however, with a newer and more significant meaning. That which was once shameful and unacceptable is now to be embraced and affirmed.

The themes of this poetry are themes common to men everywhere, in a larger sense. The difference being, that because of the peculiar historical experiences of his race, the Negritude poet defined newer and different ways of suffering. Alienation from self, anxiety, revolt, hate, nostalgia, etc., are themes which abound in these poems. In Leon Damas' striking poem, <u>They Came That Night</u>, the frenzy of the African dance freezes before the reader's eyes, transforming it into a museum relic, as Samuel Allen noted, when the enslaver suddenly loomed in the village pathway. The typographic form to which the author has recourse serves to better enhance the rhythm:

(Note: These poems were all translated from the French.)

"They came that night when the
tom
  toms were rolling from
    rythm to
      rythm
        the frenzy
of the eyes
the frenzy of the hands the frenzy
of the feet of statues
SINCE THEN
How many like ME ME ME
have died
since they came that night when the
tom
  toms
    were rolling from
      rythm to
        rythm
          the frenzy
of the yes
the frenzy of the hands the frenzy
of the feet of statues.

And David Diop's: He Who Has Lost All:

The sun was shining on my cabin
And my wives were lovely and supple
Swaying like palm trees in the evening breeze
My children were gliding over the wide river
hiding death in its depthness
And in canoes we fought with the crocodiles
The kindly moon shone down on our dances
The wild sonorous rythm of the tom-toms
boomed out joyfully and carelessly
as we danced, in freedom, around the fires.
Then one day, silence. . .
The sun no longer brightened my empty cabin.
My women pressed their lips
To the hard thin lips of the cold eyed conquerors
And my children yielded their peaceful nudity
To uniforms of blood and steel.
Your voice too, Tom-Toms, is gone
Tom-Toms of my nights, Tom-Toms of my fathers
Slavery's chains have rent my heart!

Damas again movingly evokes the angoisse (anguish) which haunts the Negritude poet when he exclaimed:

"My todays each look on my yesterdays
with rolling eyes big with hatred and shame
Still my bewilderment of old goes on,
remembering
lashes from the knotted whip, bodies charred
from the toes to the calcinated back
flesh dead from the branding iron, arms
broken from the unleashed whip."

For Aimé Césaire, "Negritude" reflects itself in the poem as an affirmed subjective disposition:

"My negritude is not a rock, its
deafness hurled against the clamor of the day
My negritude is neither a tower nor a cathedral
It plunges into the red flesh of the earth
It plunges into the burning flesh of the sky
It pierces the opaque prostration
with its upright patience."

The Negritude Leopold Senghor poeticizes in the following lines, evokes both the Black Woman and Africa:

"Woman nude, woman black
Dressed in your color which is life,
in your form which is beauty!
I have grown big in your shade, the

sweetness of your hands has covered my eyes
And here in the heart of summer
and at noon I discover you
The promised land
And your beauty strikes me to the
heart with the lightening speed
of the eagle."

Paul Niger strikes a militant note in his poem, I Do Not Like That Africa:

"The Africa of yes-men.
The Africa of sleeping men awaiting
like a benediction
the awakening kick of the boot.
The Africa of negresses serving the
alcohol of forgetfulness on the trays
of their lips.
Africa is going to speak.
Because now it is for her to demand:
'I wanted a land where men are men
and not wolves
and not sheep
and not chameleons.
Centuries of suffering have sharpened by tongue
I have learn to count by the drops
of my blood, and I recover the say-
ings of the generous prophets
I insist that on my soil of green stems,
the upright man wears at last the
gravity of the heavens'."

In most of his poetry, reference is being made not to a geographically delimited Africa, but to Africa as symbolic of the homeland where the poet is at one with himself and all he surveys.

The founders of Negritude were initially faced with a very serious problem. How were they, in effect, to affirm their Negro-ness without becoming racists in the process? How were they to reconcile the very definite feeling of belonging more particularly to the black community of the human family, with a goal that opened on the universal brotherhood of man? By affirming, they concluded, their specificity as black men of the human community. Gide had already pointed out that one way of attaining the universal was by affirming the particular. In this way, the more the founders of Negritude affirmed and exalted their uniqueness as black men, the more they affirmed themselves as men. As black men living a particular existential condition, the only way to achieve dignity and respect for the race was not by denying it, but by responding, rather, in unmistakeable terms to those who were wont to deny you your humanity because of it. Sartre phrased it differently when he exclaimed: "I affirm myself fully as a man when I exalt my humanity in my relationship with men who are different from me."

The development of this concept was counterbalanced by elements of humanism. And though the main concern of these poets was an attempt to rejoin the real self across the abyss of the cultural alienation imposed upon them, Negritude is also a horizon which opens on the universal.

We see, then, that Negritide is racial, but not racist. This racial consciousness arose out of specific, peculiar, socio-historic experiences. In effect, these black artists and intellectuals were striving for a world without racism not for a world without races. They felt that at the final rendezvous of give and take, in a culturally pluralistic world, that diversity made for greater richness. What they vehemently laid claim to was the right to assert their own personality, rather than to be an extension of an alien personality.

Today, more than thirty years since the appearance of this literary development, it is obvious that the conditions which once operated to make it inevitable have been considerably modified. The African writers are addressing themselves more to an African audience, and writing and creating out of traditional and contemporary African experiences. Their works in the main, are devoid of that tenseness which stamps the writings of Afro-American and Caribbean authors who are subjected to a more subtly discriminatory way of life. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that in its extra-African manifestations, at least, Negritude is the literary embodiment of vigorous protest against the experiences endured by the expatriated African and his descendants. An authentic literature was created out of authentic living conditions, and it was only when black writers and poets ceased to imiatate their French, Parnassian masters, and to give artistic expression to the facts of <u>their</u> reality and existential condition, that they stamped their works with an originality that commands universal attention.

Negritude is certainly relevant to the black American's struggle for full freedom. In fact, it was Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, and others, who served as models for the founders of the Negritude movement. The relevance of this concept to the Negro-American is found in the explanation that that latter's presence in America can only be explained in terms of the colonial experience, or within that context. The particular form that American Negritude is presently assuming, be it political (demonstrations, etc.) or literary (Leroy Jones, black nationalism) are symptomatic of the irresistable drive toward affirmation, expressed in terms of circumstances governed by history, time and place.

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RECOMMENDED PERIODICALS AND NEWSPAPERS

Africa Today
African Studies Bulletin
*Black Scholar
Black World
*Ebony
*Freedomways
*Journal of Negro Education
Journal of Negro History
Negro Digest
*Negro History Bulletin
*Phylon

*Highly recommended

SPECIAL RESOURCES:

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Special resource center and library. Strong emphasis on curriculum development and teacher training.